

## [Riley Patrick]

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Folk stuff - Rangelore

Phipps, Woody

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Riley Patrick, 75, was born Apr. 3, 1862, in Albany N.Y. His father, a Union soldier, moved the family in 1865, to Ft. Riley, Indian Terr., or, to the site the City of Tulsa, Okla., now occupies. While Patrick was taught to ride a horse at an early age, and rode one to school as a child, he didn't work any cattle until Sam Burnett, who operated a ranch S. of Ft. Riley, employed him in 1885. He left in 1887 and drifted to San Angelo, Tex., where he was employed by the Stillman Ranch, then by Wellington, a cattle dealer, then drifted to the King Ranch. After a short time, he was employed on the Wilder Ranch in San Patricio Co, then the McFadden Ranch, N. of the Welder Ranch.. The last ranch he was employed on, was the Canada Ranch, loc. N. of Victoria, Tex. After leaving the Canada Ranch, he went to Fort Worth, where he was employed by cattle dealers, later employed by the Fort Worth Stock Yards until his age and infirmities forced him to retire in 1935. He now sell pencils on the streets, and resides in the Reliance Hotel, Ft. Worth Texas. His story:

"Sure. I lived and worked on the range when it was really a cattle range. You see me here. All broke up, and selling pencils to get by. I could go to live on several ranches and have nothing to do but set around, and maybe feed a few chickens or so. The reason I don't do

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it is because I was man enough at one time to make a living on the range just like I told you, and that kind of a man never gives up 'til they throw dirt in his face.

"I wasn't really born on the range, though. I was born in Albany, New York, on April 3d, 1862. My dad was a Union soldier, and when the war was over, we moved to Fort Riley in the Indian Territory at Call Junction. Tulsa Oklahoma now sets on that spot. Kid like, and seeing a lot of cow punchers all the time, I wanted to learn to ride a hoss, and that's the first C.12 - 2/11/41 - Texas 2 Phipps, Woody

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thing I guess I did learn. Later on, when I went to school, I always rode a hoss.

"My family was always set against me ever being a cow puncher, so I didn't get to be one 'til after dad died in '82. He wanted me to be a lawyer. The main reason why I never was one was because I didn't have any ambition to be one, and my folks didn't have the dough to put me through. You know, it takes dough to learn to be a lawyer. All I ever done 'til dad died, was to ride around, hunt and fish. I had me a hoss of my own, and it wasn't a pony either. Most of the kids of that day had a pony but I had a real hoss. It cost my dad about \$30.00 in a day when the best hoss flesh was selling for around \$40.00.

"A few months after dad died, I was hired by Sam Burnett to ride herd on his cows. He run a ranch on about 10 sections, with about 200 acres leased for grazing. I guess the place was about three miles Scout of Fort Riley, and run around three to 600 head of hosses,

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and four to 5,000 cattle. He had several irons, the main ones being the 'XY, and the XX' irons. The reason for having so many irons was because he bought and sold so much.

"He'd buy up from three to 5,000 head, then trail drive 'em to Kansas City. Those trail drives would be split up into about three bunches, in order to handle the herds better. We didn't have but about eight regular hands, and had to hire his trail drive hands. He'd hire forty-50 hands for every drive. Had to have 'em because a trail drive takes a-plenty help. Wasn't no trouble to get hands because a cow puncher is about the worst drifter there ever was. I drifted a-plenty myself. 3 Phipps, Woody

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"The regulars on Sam's place was Bill Stegelman, who later turned out to be the greatest U.S. Marshall ever was, Joe Canada, Jack Farraday, Whitey Lewis, A fellow named Red, and I forget the rest of their names. After all, it's been quite a spell since I was with 'em. The reason I recall the ones I named was because I was thrown with them more then the others. although, we was all the best of buddies. If you jumped one of us, you might's well jumped all of us because you had to fight us all.

"It was a noted fact that every time a ranch crew met another in Fort Riley, it wouldn't be long 'til there was a fight, and, likely as not, it'd turn out to be a gun fight, And when they had a gun fight, somebody'd hit the dust a goner. Looking back at it all now, and the times we met others, I believe the ranch ram rods sort of worked together and tried to keep their hands away from the others.

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"The Burnett riders slung together better than the others too, because they were into more than the other ranches. Sam going around and buying so many cattle, and getting so many irons, it was sort of natural that more than just the ones he bought found their way into his herds. [nother?] thing, Sam's cows were what's known as 'prolific'. His cows'd have four-five calves a year. We used to say that a calf had no right to get away from it's mother because it'd likely get a strange iron on it if it did. For that reason, Sam paid more then the other ranchers, and wouldn't hire nothing but the best riders and shots. He couldn't use no other kind. Too much chance of trouble, and when you had trouble in those days, you'd better 4 Phipps, Woody

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fill your hand with a six shooter and shoot straight and faster than the fellow you was having your trouble with. Of course, we didn't go to work as rustlers. There was rustlers in the country but we didn't go to work that way. We just had an understanding and knew that we had to produce. In fact, we didn't call lifting cows rustling when we done it for the ranch. We called it, 'Buckarooing'. Another thing, nobody talked about. Not even around each other. We just done our work, which was what we was paid for, and nothing was said about it.

"I said we had to be good riders. Other ranchers was always bringing wild hoss stuff to Burnett's place to have us bust 'em for them. Sam's big hoss herd was mostly wild stuff. He didn't have these hosses for sale, but just for use on the ranch it'self. We'd go out and bust 30-40 at a time, and we'd just bust the ones we personally wanted ourselves. That way, we always had good hoss flesh to work with. That's almost the main thing there was

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to ranch work. Good hosses. When a hoss got to where it didn't have the heart for the work, or had an accident, we shot it.

"A big remuda is an important thing on a trail drive. Sam's drives always had a big remuda, whereas, the other drivers tried to get along with as few hosses as they figured would get 'em through because the [?] the hosses, the fewer the men they had to put on the remuda. Reason I know about the other drives was because when a drive come through our territory, and they were short a man or so, the boss'd loan us out. We was always ready to go on a trail drive because we'd be able to go to places like, Parsons, Kansas, and Kansas City, where we'd be 5 Phipps, Woody

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able to go on a whing ding. All of us follows liked to throw a whing ding when ever we got a chance, and the trail drives was the only time we ever got away from Fort Riley, which after all, was a little place.

"Of course, a trail drive wasn't a picnic. We'd have to go through a lot of brush on the drive, and at our best, we'd stand to lose from three to 400 critters on every drive. Then, you had the Indians to watch out for. They'd ask you for beef, then if turned down, they'd stampede the herd. You take the Osages and the Shawness, and they was real friendly. They'd go to the trail boss and ask for say, 20 head. When Sam was along, he'd always turn down the first asking. Then, they'd stand there and ask for less. Usually, when they asked Sam for 20, they left with about two. The reason Sam always cut 'em down was because he knew they'd steal a few head anyway.

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"In going through the brushy country, more then likely, we'd have the herd strung out for a [milesor?] so, maybe four or five miles..All according to how many head we had in the drive, and the country we was going through. When we'd have the herd all strung out that away, we couldn't possibly watch all the critters and the Indians'd wait in a place 'til there wasn't no cow punchers in sight, then they'd cut out a few head. Seven or eight. They was so slick at it, that we hardly ever caught 'em in the act. We just missed the critters and that was all. However, if they was turned down completely, they'd stampede the herd and we'd lose a whole lot more.

"The Delavar tribe was about the smartest sneak thieves of all the Indians. When we saw them we'd sure tighten our 6 Phipps, Woody

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guard because if we didn't, they'd try to take the whole herd. And, they was smart enough that they didn't always depend on a stomp to scatter the cattle. You see, some of the Indians'd stampede the herd, then when it was all scattered, they'd ride around and gather up all they could catch. Another thing, if a herd got too badly scattered in a stomp, some of it'd never be rounded up again.

"The one tribe that we seldom ever saw, but when we did see them, it meant trouble, was the Saggin Fox Tribe. They was killers. Their system was to thin out the cow punchers and then take what beef they wanted. I never was in a trail drive that met the Saggin Foxes, but I heard a-plenty about 'em. No, I can't say that I could locate the places where these tribes hung out. I'd say that they didn't have no certain place but moved their tribes around

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from time to time. The peaceful tribes usually had a locality where they'd stay, but then, they'd move around in that locality.

"We had a-plenty stampedes in our own roundups, though, that wasn't caused by no Indians. They was caused by strange animals coming up to the herd, skunks, strange noises, such as a jingly saddle in a lull, or anything along that line. The thing that nearly always caused stomps was storms. Lightning storms especially. Many's the time I've seen lightning flashing around on the horns of a herd. That makes 'em mighty skittish, and I don't blame 'em a bit because it's mighty scary times when that happens.

"Anytime we expected a stomp, we'd all be out a riding around the herd, singing songs, talking to the critters.. We 7 Phipps, Woody

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knew, of course, that they couldn't understand us but that shows you what psychology can do. We done that to make the critters feel that we wasn't scared of nothing, hoping that they'd take the same slant. It worked most of the time. You'd never know 'til it was too late when it didn't work, because they'd be off like an express train when it didn't work. One minute, they're all standing around, or lying down, with maybe a few of them a bit restful. The next thing you know, theres not a critter in sight that aint doing it's level best to run it's legs off. If you happen to be in front of the herd, it could be just too bad for you because a herd on the stomp runs over everything in it's way. That's one of the reasons so many critters get killed in a stomp, because they run over a cliff, or something, and stomp a good many of them down,

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"Theres quite an art to stopping a stomp, too. It's important to stop one as soon's possible, to keep as many as you can from getting killed. The way to stop a stomp is for some good rider with a [ood?] hoss, to get out in front and get the leader to turn. Once he gets the leader to turn, and keep turning, the whole herd gets to running in a circle, or what's called, 'A Mill.' After they get to milling, they run 'til they're all tired out. After one of the critters bawls, others take it up, and the stomp to stopped in a few minutes after the first bawl. That's another one of the reasons Sam wanted all top riders. In case of a pinch like a stomp, any one of his riders was capable of getting out front at the first chance.

"One of the funniest things about Sam's outfit, was the 8 Phipps, Woody

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chuck wagon. Not that the wagon it'self was funny, but what the boys done to all the cookys that took it over. While I was on the place, the only time they was able to keep a cooky almost, was on the roundups, because they played every kind of a joke on any new comer that wasn't on to their jokes. They'd give 'em outlaw hosses to ride, telling them before they mounted that it was a tame hoss, or anything like that. The roundup cooky was a cow poke like themselves that was plenty tough, but stove up from riding wild hosses. Every step to him, was a pain. It might have been that they just respected his condition, I don't know. I do know, though, that they never played anything on him and they could hardly ever get a cooky to take their kitchen over.

"As I said, I met quite a lot of drifting cow pokes from other places, and I always listened to their tales about these places. The wildest tales was told about [est?] Texas, so after about



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four years on Sam's place, I decided to drift. I drifted to San Angelo, Texas, and hired out to the Stillman Ranch. They only run a few head in the 'XY ' iron, and I didn't stay with 'em but about two months. Just long enough to get their Spring roundup work over with.

Next fellow I went to work for, was a cattle dealer at San Angelo by the name of Wellington. He run a small ranch in the 'OO' iron, and I wasn't long with him either.

“Since I'd heard a lot about the King Ranch in the Rio Grande country of Texas, I decided to drift there. I hired out to the number two ranch at Falfurias. That was a curious place. They never asked a man's name, but all the whites was 9 Phipps, Woody

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known to each other as, 'Pinkey, Whitey, Red, Shorty, Fat,' anything but a name. Nearly all the cow punchers on the place was Mexicans. If I recall it right, Sam Claiborne was the ram rod on the number two Ranch. The number one Ranch ran through Robstown, Bishop, on down to Kingsville.

“I wasn't so satisfied on the King Ranch, so I wasn't long drifting from there either. The next place I went to work was on the Welder Ranch. It was a big outfit, running about 50,000 head in the 'Lazy V' iron. You make a Lazy V by making it horizontal, or lying down. The ranch was in San Patricio county, and Bob Welder, the old man's boy, was the ram rod.

“Old man Welder seldom ever come out from Victoria, where he lived all the time. I think there was about eight ranch millionaires that lived there, and had ranches somewhere

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in the Valley. The Welder place is nearly all broke up into homesteads now, but they still run quite a few head there now. These big ranches never did appeal to me, because a cow puncher on these things never did see the ram rod, hardly. I don't guess I just wanted to see the ram rod, but it seemed like I was working for a factory instead of a ranch. We boys had our fun, alright, when we had small riding contests from time to time. Then, we had other ways of having a little fun. We was always having a shooting match for practice. Shooting at boards, sticks, and so on.

I don't recall just how long I was on the Welder place, but I drifted from there to the McFadden Ranch. Al McFadden was the ram rod, and they run about 35,000 head in the 'KO' iron. That's another ranch that's been cut up into homesteads, but 10 Phipps, Woody

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they still run about 10,000 head there now.

"After a short time there, I drifted on to the Canada Ranch, run by Jim, Bob, and Mike Canada. That was one of the oldest ranches in the country. On account of the Canadas doing so much buying and sellings they run from 20,000 head to 70,000 [head?] at a time on the ranch. The Canadas done the most of the trail driving in that country. They'd start a drive to clear into Kansas City, going up the Old Shoshone Trail. I think a U.S. Highway now goes up that trail. [I?] don't exactly recall the number of it, but I think it's the '77' highway.

"They made their drives 'way back, when they had to go all the way to Kansas City. Every year, the drives got shorter and shorter, until the last drive was made just before the '90s,

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to the Sante Fe Spr, at Bay City... The next year, the Saint Louis, Brownsville, and Mexico railroad built a spur right up to the ranch. It's all now owned by the 'Mop' road.

“That Spring roundup following the last trail drive made by the Canadas was the last work I ever done on any ranch. I left there to come to Fort Worth, where I went to work for cattle dealers. Then the Yards was built, I went to work there, and worked right up 'til I was let go because I was too old to get around fast enough. While working on the Yards, I handled many a critter from one of the ranches I put in a little time on. And it always made me a little homesick. The reason I stuck was because I was working in a town, and there was more money in it.